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# CIA gets backing in Pacific

The Central Intelligence Agency is coming under heavy criticism for its project which recovered part of a Russian submarine from the floor of the Pacific Ocean.

We disagree with the critics. The CIA's job is to develop intelligence, and getting our hands on a sunken Soviet submarine seems to be a proper exercise in that goal.

The opportunity existed, our technology proved capable of meeting the challenge and we gained important information.

Was the project worth \$350 million? That is difficult to judge. There will be those who point out how much food \$350 million would have bought, or how many hospitals that much money could have built. The same comparison can be made for any military or intelligence agency expenditure.

Then the question is asked in turn how much freedom and security are

worth and whether we could have reached so high a standard of living if we were not capable of defending ourselves. At some point, the decision to proceed was made; and it is a supportable one.

The CIA is wide open to criticism for some of its operations that have come to light lately. It went beyond its jurisdiction domestically and deserved to be brought up short. Better oversight and better decision-making within the agency itself is necessary.

The CIA is a prime target now. For an agency that supposedly operates in secret, it has lately developed a gift for grabbing news space that a circus advance man would envy.

No sensible person, however, can favor abolishing or crippling the CIA, for it plays an essential role in national defense. While the great hue and cry tends to confuse issues, we must not lose sight of the essential function of the agency.

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## ... but not in opening of mail

While we can support the Central Intelligence Agency in its Pacific Ocean project to recover a Russian submarine, we cannot in any manner condone the agency's illegal opening of U.S. mail.

The director of the CIA has confirmed testimony given before a House subcommittee that first class mail addressed to certain overseas points was regularly opened in U.S. post offices. The federal law prohibits such an act without court approval. The director says the CIA has now ceased this practice. The CIA has demonstrated a very disturbing tendency to go beyond its

jurisdiction domestically, and needs restraints.

And as for the practice of miscellaneous federal agencies, even state real estate commissions, getting the postal service to monitor and record origins of mail to individuals and businesses, we join the call for legislation that requires closer congressional scrutiny.

In certain cases, mail inspection may be justifiable. Decisions of this sort should best be made in the courts as a matter of protection of the rights of privacy.